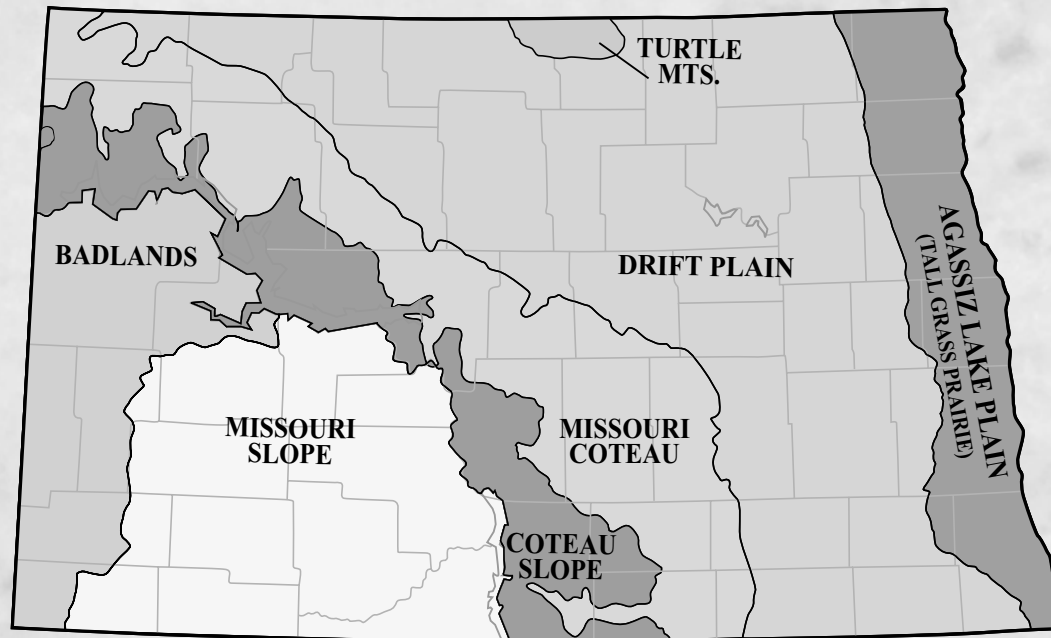


Native Flora



Tallgrass Prairie

Because tall grass prairie in eastern North Dakota was so productive and easily converted to agricultural use, it is now one of the most endangered habitat types in the world. Less than two percent of the surface area in this region remains in prairie, with another seven percent disturbed and planted back into hayland (e.g., brome grass and alfalfa). Less than three percent of the surface area remains as lakes and wetlands. Forests along major river systems constitute another two percent. The Sheyenne National Grasslands, home to more than 40 sensitive plant and animal species, holds the bulk of remaining native tallgrass prairie in the state.

Tewaukon National Wildlife Refuge, Englevale Slough, Kellys Slough and Prairie Chicken Wildlife Management Areas, are excellent sites for birding. Fort Ransom, Turtle River and Icelandic state parks preserve beautiful examples of native prairie riverbottom forests.

Drift Prairie

Today native mixed-grass prairie makes up about 16 percent, with lakes and wetlands composing another six percent, of the surface area in this vast region west of the Red River Valley. Sullys Hill National Game

Preserve, along the forested edge of Devils Lake, offers walking trails and wildlife viewing for a nice day trip. Forested areas near the Pembina River (Cavalier County, Pembina Hills, and Jay V. Wessel WMAs) provide abundant wildlife viewing opportunities including deer, elk and moose. Lonetree WMA, Arrowwood, J. Clark Salyer, and Des Lacs national wildlife refuges all provide unique hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Missouri Coteau

Due to its rocky and wetland studded terrain, nearly 55 percent of the native prairie and wetlands in this region remain intact. During the spring and summer this region of the state, America's duck factory, literally explodes with waterfowl and shorebirds. Long Lake and Lostwood national wildlife refuges, and Chase Lake WMA are must-see stops for birders.

Coteau Slope

Just under 50 percent of the Coteau Slope remains in native prairie and wetlands. Audubon National Wildlife Refuge, as well as Audubon, Arena Lake and McKenzie Slough WMAs, offer good hunting and bird watching opportunities.

Prairie smoke is a typical wildflower in the tallgrass prairie of the Sheyenne National Grasslands.

Missouri River & Gallery Forest

Harold Umber



Missouri River near Garrison.

Cottonwood Forests

Of the 350 miles of Missouri River in North Dakota, about 95 miles remain free-flowing and unimpeded by dams (70 miles between Bismarck and Garrison Dam and 25 miles upstream from Williston). Due to elimination of periodic flooding as a result of the Garrison and Oahe dams, the gallery cottonwood forests that Lewis and Clark knew so well are now being replaced by aspen, ash, elm, and oaks. Those interested in seeing the remaining vestiges of this unique forest community should focus on Cross Ranch State Park, Fort Mandan County Park, Fort Union and Knife River Indian Villages national historic sites, and Smith Grove, Trenton, and Lewis and Clark WMAs. Fort Stevenson and Lake Sakakawea state parks and Oahe WMA, although affected by the dams, provide ample recreational opportunities along the river.

Missouri Slope

About 27 percent of the unglaciated mixed and short-grass prairie, known as the Missouri Slope, remains in its native state (13 percent native prairie, 12 percent alkaline and barren clay pan flats, and two percent wetlands). Schnell Recreational Area, Killdeer Mountains WMA and portions of the Little Missouri National Grasslands, in and of themselves, are well worth a weekend camping trip. Sweet Briar and Indian Creek WMAs provide good fishing and hunting opportunities.

Badlands

The steep and rugged badlands terrain, flanking the Little Missouri River, caused many settlers to think twice before putting down a plow in this part of the state. As a result, more than 93 percent of the land remains in native vegetation. The north and south units of Theodore Roosevelt National Park provide visitors with striking vistas and abundant wildlife viewing opportunities. For the more adventurous, the 1.1 million acres of the Little Missouri National Grasslands provides camping, hunting, and bird watching opportunities available nowhere else in the state. The badlands are truly North Dakota's crown jewel of natural areas.

***BILL JENSEN** is a big game biologist with the department and a frequent contributor to North Dakota OUTDOORS.*

Missouri River Tour Announcement

On the weekend of July 21-22 the North Dakota Natural Science Society is sponsoring a tour and presentations on the natural history of the Missouri River. The tour will be based out of the 4H Camp near Washburn, North Dakota. Saturday's events will include presentations on the plants, animals and natural history of the area. A car caravan will tour the area and local authorities will be on hand to explain the natural history of the bluffs and prairies at Cross Ranch and the cultural history of Knife River Indian Village. In the evening the Society will host a dinner and featured speaker. Sunday morning will focus on a canoe trip down the Missouri River.

Anyone interested in the natural history of the Missouri River is encouraged to attend. Dormitory style lodging and room to pitch a tent are available at the 4H Camp for those who wish to stay overnight. To pre-register or get additional information, contact Alexis Duxbury, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, 100 North Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, ND 58501-5095, telephone number 328-6348 (days), 224-9762 (evenings).